

**Testimony of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Labor and Public Employees Committee**

Tuesday February 17, 2015

Senator Winfield, Representative Tercyak, members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee, my name is Paul Costello, Director of Apprenticeship and Training for the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and National Electrical Contractors Association Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee. I am here to express our strong opposition of Senate Bill 81, An Act Concerning Journeymen and Apprentices.

The intent of the Bill is to increase the number of apprentices an employer may hire, and while this may sound good, apprenticeship is not about hiring new employees at low wages. In order for an apprentice to obtain the skills, knowledge and abilities required to learn the trade they must complete a required number of related classroom instructional hours and required on the job training hours under direct supervision. Changing the hiring ratio could lead to additional apprentices showing up to a jobsite and not having the proper supervision because their journeyman is not there. Worse would be the potential of the only journeyman not being there and apprentices working unsupervised. In the building and construction trades this is a disaster waiting to happen by placing the lives of apprentices in jeopardy without the proper supervision. It would be very difficult for a journey person to directly supervise and train more than one apprentice at a time.

If I was an electrical contractor equal to the size of the Labor and Public Employees Committee with each of the 13 members holding an electrical license, I would be able to employ 5 apprentices under the current ratio. This would allow me to safely and properly train those apprentices under the direct supervision of a journeyman even if they are not all there that day. The proposed change to the ratio would increase the number of apprentices to 65! How can 13 journeymen even keep track of that many apprentices on a construction site let alone train them for their hands-on skills and look after their wellbeing?

In construction, conditions on jobsites change constantly, and manpower needs shift during the workday. Some of the factors that are encountered are delays, weather conditions, and illnesses; any of these variables may lower the amount of journeymen that the apprentices work with. The potential to have more apprentices on a jobsite working together unsupervised would increase if there were not a proper ratio in effect. This is not a safe working condition; it does not provide an apprentice the opportunity to learn his or her trade properly.

The apprenticeship ratio issue has been in front of this Committee and others a number of times over the years. I first spoke in opposition on HB 5621 in 2006 and again in 2007 on HB 5033. Most recently I was in front of this Committee last year on HB 5146. Each of these Bills did not have the support of the Department of Labor, and neither does SB 81 this year. The Department of Labor did set up a workgroup in 2009 to investigate the need to change the apprenticeship ratio because of these concerns with the ratio. The workgroup was well balanced with representatives on both sides on the issue representing the construction industry. It was through their hard work and findings that the ratio for plumbers was changed to match the ratio for electricians. The hiring ratio for all trades that we have today was the result of their findings.

There are case by case instances when a contractor may need a modification of the hiring ratio because of the current market. It is because of these changes that a sponsor of an apprenticeship program may request relief. The Department of Labor has a simple application for a sponsor to complete. The questionnaire focuses on the sponsor's apprenticeship completion record, business

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF LABOR APPLICATION FOR APPRENTICESHIP RATIO RELIEF

www.ctapprenticeship.com

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Name of Firm/Sponsor _____ Trade _____
 dba Name, if any _____
 Mailing Address _____ Zip _____
 Actual Location _____ Zip _____
 Phone Number _____ Fax Number _____
 City _____ County _____ State _____
2. Type of Firm (Check only one) ☐ Corporation ☐ Partnership ☐ Proprietorship ☐ Joint Venture ☐ LLC
3. How many years has the firm been in business? _____ Under the same name? _____ Program Approval Date: _____
4. Number of previous requests for ratio relief within the past five years: _____
5. Within the past five years has the firm, any affiliate, (including any contractor of record) any predecessor company or entity, owner of 5.0% or more of the firm's shares, director, officer, partner, or proprietor been the subject of: (Check any that apply and explain under sponsor remarks. It is imperative that a full explanation of the circumstances relating to a "yes" statement be submitted to ensure an objective evaluation by the Department. Attach additional pages if necessary.)
- ☐ None of the following are applicable (5A through 5N)
- ☐ yes ☐ no A. A judgement or conviction of any business related conduct constituting a crime under state or federal law?
- ☐ yes ☐ no B. A currently pending indictment for any business-related conduct constituting a crime under state or federal law?
- ☐ yes ☐ no C. A grant of immunity for any business-related conduct constituting a crime under state or federal law or regulation?
- ☐ yes ☐ no D. Any final determination of a violation of any federal labor law or regulation?
- ☐ yes ☐ no E. Any OSHA violation that was categorized as willful, repeat, failure to abate, or was based on retaliating against an employee for filing a safety or health complaint?
- ☐ yes ☐ no F. Any final determination of a violation of any state labor law or regulation?
- Public work violation? ☐ yes ☐ no Was this violation willful? ☐ yes ☐ no
- ☐ yes ☐ no G. A consent order with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, or a federal or state enforcement determination involving a construction-related violation of federal or state environmental laws?
- ☐ yes ☐ no H. A debarment from federal contracts for violation of the Davis-Bacon Act, 49 Stat. 101(1931), 40 USC 276a-2?
- ☐ yes ☐ no I. A debarment from state contracts for violation of Connecticut's prevailing wage law pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 31-53a?
- ☐ yes ☐ no J. A debarment or suspension for violation of any other state prevailing wage law?
- ☐ yes ☐ no K. Rejection of any bid or proposed subcontract or general contract for lack of responsibility pursuant to state law?
- ☐ yes ☐ no L. Any final determination of a violation of any state occupational licensing statute or regulation?
- ☐ yes ☐ no M. A consent order entered into with the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection or any other state or federal government agency?
- ☐ yes ☐ no N. Any pending enforcement proceeding by a federal, state or municipal agency regarding an alleged violation of the law?
- ☐ yes ☐ no O. Are all current apprentices attending related instruction (if required)?
- ☐ yes ☐ no P. Does firm have an active Job Order with the Department for Journeypersons?
 For Apprentices? ☐ yes ☐ no

SPONSOR REMARKS (Reason for request, attach additional sheet if necessary):

CERTIFICATION: The undersigned acknowledges that this questionnaire is submitted for the express purpose of inducing the Connecticut Labor Department to authorize the hiring of apprentices in a certain ratio to journeypersons under its state apprenticeship program pursuant to Section 31-51d-5(l) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. Applicant acknowledges that the Department may, in its discretion, determine the truth and accuracy of all statements made herein. Applicant further acknowledges that intentional submission of false or misleading information in this application may constitute reasonable cause for institution of a formal de-registration proceeding against applicant's apprenticeship program pursuant to Section 31-51d-7 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. Applicant states and certifies under penalty of law (Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 53a-175 Class A Misdemeanor) that the information submitted in this questionnaire and any attached pages is true, to the best of his or her knowledge.

Signature of Officer	Date	Signature of Contractor of Record
Printed or Typed Name of Officer	Title	Printed or Typed Name of Contractor of Record

Please return to:

Connecticut Dept. of Labor
Office of Apprenticeship Training
200 Folly Brook Boulevard
Wethersfield, CT 06109

For Office Use Only			
Date Received:		Reviewed & Verified by:	
Date Received CO:		Initials:	
Recommended:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Initials:	
SAC Subcommittee Recommendation			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes If no, explain	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	Initials	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes If no, explain	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partial	Initials	
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Partial Approval for: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	
Signature: _____		Commissioner	
The Connecticut Department of Labor			